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This same plan is pursued throughout the book. Extracts from many authors are introduced, each accompanied by inductive questions aiming to show exactly what the writer is trying to make the reader feel, and to show the art, the methods, by which he accomplishes his purpose. To answer these questions the student will continually be required to put himself into the environment and feelings of others, to think and feel as others think and feel. What such work will do for the student needs no demonstration.

Besides somewhat complete studies of De Amicis, Dr. John Watson, and several prominent American authors, there are briefer treatments of a score of writers, as well as chapters on emphasis, tone quality, historical decrease in predication and in sentence length, the emotional quality of words and phrases, figures of speech, etc., each accompanied with "studies." The last chapter mentioned is one of decided interest, as it treats especially of the spiritual meaning of figures. Although hardly so clear as it might be, it will come as a revelation to many a high-school student that has worried over the rhetorical names of figures without seeing any reason under the sun for their use; for even such students *feel* that the rhetorics are far astray when they say that "figures are used for ornament."

In parts the book is not what one wishes it were. The author has done so much that it seems as though he could have gone a little further in not a few places, could have made the work much easier for both teacher and student. Taken as a whole, however, it seems sure to mark an epoch in secondary school work in literature.

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*A Brief History of the English Language.* By OLIVER FARRAR EMERSON, A.M., PH.D. The Macmillan Company, New York, 1896. Pp. x + 265.

PROFESSOR EMERSON'S *History of the English Language* was so well received that it is not remarkable that he should have been led to prepare a more elementary book on the subject. The earlier work was designed for colleges and for teachers of English, but such is the state of scholarship in our country just at present that not a few for whom it was intended may have found the book rather advanced. However this may be, there were the secondary schools in which the book, as it

stood, was not available, and on the whole there was good reason for undertaking this *Brief History*. It is an excellent book, as was its predecessor, creditable to American scholarship, and such as to be extremely profitable to the student. The present volume is not formed from the earlier by simple omission; it is, as far as we can judge, entirely re-written. The material is now presented in a style somewhat simpler and more popular, with some typographical aids to clearness, and with considerable rearrangement.

In this rearrangement of material the author has made some profitable changes. Part IV, which in the original work was a history of English sounds, taking up perhaps a quarter of the whole treatise, has now become a more popular account of the changes in the forms of words exemplified by the English language. It is simpler in character and relatively much shorter than in the original volume; there, it was next to the longest part; here, it is next to the shortest. The change was wise. Without, for an instant, intimating that a study of phonology is to be dispensed with, we feel that younger students, untrained in languages and without the habit of dealing with scholarly questions as such, cannot really appreciate the phonology of their own or any other language. Hence, Professor Emerson did well in simplifying his treatment of the subject, as also elsewhere in curtailing his treatment of Grimm's and Verner's laws and in his omission of the linguistic peculiarities of high German. Necessary as these matters are for a scholarly understanding of our language, they are such as to repel the younger student without giving him much assistance. A part of the relative saving has been devoted to Part V on the subject of inflections, a matter which can be readily understood by younger students, even if they cannot easily remember everything. It is, moreover, a matter difficult to curtail, and except for his treatment of the verb, Professor Emerson takes about as much actual space for his study of the subject in his shorter book as in the other.

The more strictly historical part as to the development of the dialects, and of the standard language, is relatively somewhat increased, and, we think, rightly. We regret that the author did not also allow himself even a little more latitude in treating the subject of the vocabulary. These topics are the most interesting to younger students; they are also those in which Professor Emerson's treatment is at its best. In these two parts is presented a truer idea of the actual and historical character of the vocabulary than can easily be found

elsewhere. Especially good is the author's view of the relation to the language of the French element.

On this matter, however, we believe there is a further word necessary: What Professor Emerson says is to the point; but he omits to say what seems to us a needful last word. In considering the relation of native and foreign elements, he follows G. P. Marsh in giving percentages calculated on the basis of counting every word every time it is used. This certainly gives an idea in itself accurate; for, if we look at any given page of Shakespeare, for instance, we can say, "About nine-tenths of this is native, the foreign proportion is small." But further analysis would show that of the native element a certain proportion is constant in all authors. The pronouns, prepositions, and conjunctions, for instance, are almost all native. Add to these the articles, numerals, auxiliaries, and certain adverbs, and we have a common element, much the same in the mouths of all, an element expressive, in the main, of relation. If we count every word every time it occurs, these words will make up nearly a half, we should say, in the language of anyone; their actual number, however, is very small, not much greater than two hundred, probably. Hence, in the calculated proportions of native words in any author, a large part always consists of a few words many times repeated. The native element is sometimes called the backbone of the language, but so far as this constant common element is concerned the figure is not quite adequate. This small number of words always the same we might perhaps call the homely warp upon which is woven the variegated woof which gives the character to the finished work, but must somehow be held together and in place. Such to our mind is a more accurate idea of this matter than the undifferentiated fact which notes the bare proportion of native and foreign elements.

But to return from this discussion, perhaps disproportionately long. We have in Professor Emerson's new book a successful re-working of his material and a simpler mode of presentation well adapted to its special audience. Less scientific as is the character of the book, it is rendered popular by no sacrifice of scholarship. The earlier work was an extremely valuable book; in its own way this new version should be no less valuable. It is greatly to be hoped that it may do much where something of the sort is needed, namely, in the making popular an accurate knowledge of the main facts in the history of our language.

EDWARD E. HALE, JR.